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EXAMINER				
ROSEN, NICHOLAS D				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/070,073

Applicant(s)

WALKER ET AL.

Examiner

Nicholas D. Rosen

Art Unit

3625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-68 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-68 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 28 February 2002 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/5508)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-68 have been examined.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on February 2, 2009 has been entered.

Claim Objections

Claim 64 is objected to because of the following informalities: The third line of claim 64 recites "receiving from at least one customer", and there are further references to the "customer" in the last four lines of the claim. The fourth line of claim 68 recites "from a requester", which appears to be either redundant, or possibly to refer to a person or device other than the customer. Also, in the fourteenth and fifteenth lines on page 31 of the amended claims, "preferred load factor discrepancy" should be "preferred itinerary load factor discrepancy", and "alternate load factor discrepancy" should be "alternate itinerary load factor discrepancy" for clarity and consistency with the antecedent usage. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claim 68 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101. Based on Supreme Court precedent and recent Federal Circuit decisions, the Office's guidance to examiners is that a § 101 process must (1) be tied to a machine or (2) transform underlying subject matter (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. In re Bilski et al, 88 USPQ 2d 1385 CAFC (2008); Diamond v. Diehr, 450 U.S. 175, 184 (1981); Parker v. Flook, 437 U.S. 584, 588 n.9 (1978); Gottschalk v. Benson, 409 U.S. 63, 70 (1972); Cochrane v. Deener, 94 U.S. 780, 787-88 (1876).

An example of a method claim that would not qualify as a statutory process would be a claim that recited purely mental steps. Thus, to qualify as a §101 statutory process, the claim should positively recite the other statutory class (the thing or product) to which it is tied, for example by identifying the apparatus that accomplishes the method steps, or positively recite the subject matter that is being transformed, for example by identifying the material that is being changed to a different state.

Here, applicant's method steps fail the first prong of the new Federal Circuit decision since they are not tied to a machine and can be performed without the use of a particular machine. Claim 68 recites receiving an electronic inquiry via a communications network, but this can be viewed as extraneous extra-solution activity, as can the recited use of databases. The determining, computing, etc., steps are not tied to a particular machine. Claim 68 also fails the second of the new Federal Circuit

decision, since it does not recite transforming underlying subject matter to a different state or thing. Thus, claim 68 is non-statutory since it may be performed without a particular machine, and largely within the human mind.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-28, 29-32, 33-34, 35-38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51-60, 61, 62, 63-66, and 67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 1 recites, "the at least one product relation parameter that is configured as an electronic data structure" as do claims 29, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 61, 62, 63, and 67. The definition of "data structure" is "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions" (The New IEEE Standard Dictionary of Electrical and Electronics Terms 308, 5th edition, 1993). The specification does not describe a data structure in this sense in such a way as to reasonably convey that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1-28, 39, 43, and 47 (with Walker)

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 27, 28, 39, 43, and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. As per claim 1, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from an inventory database, the preferred and alternate product records being indicative of preferred and alternate

products; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than the preferred product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term "upsell" rather than "downsell." It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 39 is closely parallel to claim 1, reciting means for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 43 and 47 are closely parallel to claim 1, reciting computer code for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds;

Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 2, Katz discloses receiving an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product (Figure 7; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37).

As per claim 3, Katz does not expressly disclose receiving payment for the accepted at least one alternate product, but it is well known to receive payment for products (e.g., Katz, column 2, lines 43-55). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to receive such payment, for the obvious advantage of not bankrupting oneself by providing valuable products without payment

As per claim 4, Katz discloses transmitting an offer to sell the preferred product (ibid., as applied to claim 1).

As per claim 5, Katz does not disclose that the preferred and alternate travel products are indicative of at least one of an airline ticket, a hotel room, a rental car, a cruise ticket, and train ticket, but Tasker teaches that the preferred and alternate travel products are indicative of a hotel room ("SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the preferred and alternate travel products to be indicative of at least one of an airline ticket, a hotel room, a rental car, a cruise ticket, and train ticket, for at least the stated advantage of upselling hotel accommodations.

As per claim 6, Katz discloses that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon inventory data associated with the preferred and alternate products (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37).

As per claim 7, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, but it is well known for businesses to study profit margin data, and attempt to increase sales of higher-margin products and/or services, as taught, for example, by Walker (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for selecting the at least one alternate product to be based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, for the stated advantage of increasing profits.

As per claims 16 and 17, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for a benefit to be associated with the at least one alternate product, implying selecting the benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9).

As per claim 19, Katz discloses that the selected benefit comprises at least one of additional frequent traveling miles, a price discount, a traveling class upgrade, and a package deal (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9; note especially column 27, lines 17-22).

As per claim 20, Katz does not disclose generating a benefit rating, wherein the benefit rating is based on a difference between the preferred and alternate products, but

official notice is taken that it is well known to generate ratings, and given the assumption that a user of Katz's method is not irrational, the offer of an alternate product, especially in the embodiment of the alternate product being offered as an alternative to the preferred product, rather than purely as an addition, may be presumed to be based on a benefit rating, at least of a binary type, namely, that there is or is not a benefit to be expected by offering the alternate product, e.g., that it can or cannot likely be sold at a higher price and profit than the preferred product. Tasker also implies a benefit rating, by teaching upselling to more expensive products or services of greater financial benefit to the seller. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to generate a benefit rating based on a difference between the preferred and alternate products, for the obvious advantage of determining whether or not to offer a potential alternate product.

As per claim 24, Katz discloses receiving an inquiry that is indicative of a preferred product (the request to buy a preferred product being by implication an inquiry, such as, "Do you have this product for sale?") (ibid., as applied to claim 1 above).

As per claim 27, Katz discloses receiving an inquiry from a requester (ibid., as applied to claims 1 and 24 above), and receiving an indication of a preferred benefit from the requester (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 12-59; in the sense that prior purchases indicate what benefits the customer preferred to receive, e.g., purchase of a given version of software indicates a preference for the benefit of what that software accomplishes).

As per claim 28, Katz discloses storing indications of a preferred benefit with an identifier of the requester (disclosed by or inherent from column 9, lines 6-21, and column 24, lines 12-59); receiving a second inquiry from a requester (*ibid.*, as applied to claims 1 and 24 above); retrieving the stored benefit based upon the identity of the requester (implied by column 9, lines 6-21, and column 24, lines 12-59); and transmitting an offer for the preferred benefit with an offer to sell a second alternate product (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 12-59; met by an alternate product such as a new version of previously purchased software, or mountain bike related goods or services offered to a customer who has previously purchased clothing for use in mountain biking).

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Johnson ("Family Dollar on the Move"). Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, but it is well known for businesses to study profit margin data, and attempt to increase sales of higher-margin products and/or services, as taught, for example, by Johnson (two paragraphs beginning from, "In October 1992, Family Dollar completed"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for selecting the at least one alternate product to be based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, for the obvious advantage of increasing profits.

Claims 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). As per claim 8, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a current load factor associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a current load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a current load factor, for the implied advantage of increasing the sales of tickets for seats that would otherwise go vacant and unpaid for.

As per claim 9, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the current load factor is indicative of the current available seating capacity.

As per claim 10, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a projected load factor associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data, including expected future availability in inventory (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a projected load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares

are offered because" through end of article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a projected load factor, for the implied advantage of increasing the sales of tickets for seats that would otherwise go vacant and unpaid for.

As per claim 11, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the projected load factor is indicative of the available seating capacity at the corresponding travel date.

As per claim 13, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a load factor discrepancy associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a current load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article), and in particular teaches, "If they notice that it [the load factor] is way off the scale one way or another, they are going to do something to change that," which implies taking action to reduce the number of passengers on overbooked flights, as well as offering promotional fares on flights with low load factors. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a load factor discrepancy associated with the alternate and preferred products, for the implied advantage of dealing with load factors off the scale, or at least too far toward one end of the scale, in each direction.

As per claims 14 and 15, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the projected load factor is based upon the seating capacity; Dinell's teaching of doing something if the load factor is "way off the scale" implies taking action based on a discrepancy between an optimal load factor and a current or projected load factor.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, official notice and Dinell as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of the anonymous article, "Western Pacific Load Factor Reaches 55 Percent in September," hereinafter "Western Pacific." Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Dinell discloses that the projected load factor is based upon historical travel product data, but it is well known to base projected future sales and related expectations upon historical data, as taught by "Western Pacific," specifically regarding load factor (whole article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the projected load factor to be based upon historical travel product data, for the obvious advantage of using the past as a guide – an imperfect but still useful and widely employed guide – to the future, as in, e.g., predicting holiday or other seasonal shifts in demand for airplane seats.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of De Lapa et al. (U.S. Patent 5,822,735). Katz does not disclose that the selected benefit has an associated time duration for acceptance, but Katz discloses that the selected benefit may be a discount coupon (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through

column 27, line 22; Figure 9; note especially column 27, lines 17-22), and it is well known for benefits or offers, and especially for discount coupons, to have associated time durations for acceptance, as taught, for example, by De Lapa (column 6, lines 20-34). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selected benefit to have an associated time duration for acceptance, for the obvious advantages of encouraging the customer to make a decision and a purchase, and avoiding having potential obligations hanging over the seller indefinitely.

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based on the benefit rating, but it is well known to select benefits to offer purchasers based on a benefit rating corresponding to the value of a purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based on the benefit rating, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Popyk ("The Mastercard Approach to Customer Service"). Katz does not disclose that

the benefit is a package deal benefit to be associated with the alternate travel product, the package deal benefit including at least one additional travel product, but it is well known to offer package deals as benefits, including at least one additional product with a product one is offering for sale, to make the purchase more attractive, as taught, for example, by Popyk (paragraph beginning, "We want to be remembered"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be a package deal, the package deal benefit including at least one additional travel product, for the obvious advantage of encouraging purchase of the alternate product offered as an upsell.

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based upon a difference between the value of the alternate product and the value of the preferred product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the size of customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the value of the alternate product and the value of the preferred product, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claims 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 24 above, and further in view of Webber et al. (U.S. Patent 5,331,546). As per claim 25, Katz does not expressly disclose that the alternate product is within a defined variation limit from the received inquiry, but does disclose that the alternate product is based on its relation to a received product request/inquiry (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 4-59), and it is well known to define limits of variation, as taught, for example, by Webber (column 8, line 3, through column 11, line 26). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the alternate product to be within a defined variation limit from the received inquiry, for the stated advantage of attempting upsells likely to result in purchases.

As per claim 26, Katz does not expressly disclose that the defined variation limit is based on at least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of each alternate travel product and the travel inquiry, but does, as set forth in the rejection of claim 25 above, disclose selecting an alternate product based on various types of similarity to a product inquiry, and Webber teaches a defined variation limit based on a difference between least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of possible travel products and a travel inquiry (column 8, line 3, through column 11, line 26). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the defined variation limit to be based on at least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of each alternate travel product and the travel inquiry, for the stated advantage of attempting upsells likely to

result in purchases; in particular, purchase of a ticket for a flight within a set time, e.g., two hours, of a desired time window, as in Webber.

Claims 29-32, 40, 44, and 48 (with Walker)

Claims 29, 30, 40, 44, and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. As per claim 29, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving an inquiry indicative of a preferred product from a customer, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a database, wherein the at least one alternate product record is based upon the product inquiry, the alternate product record being indicative of an alternate product; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product to a customer; and receiving an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product from the customer (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose transmitting the inquiry to at least one merchant server, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a merchant server, but does disclose dealing with multiple databases (Figures 4 and 7; column 26, lines 13-37), and discloses that the alternate/upsold product may come from another merchant,

unaffiliated with the seller of the original/preferred product (column 26, lines 49-65), which implies communicating with at least one merchant for the alternate/upsold product. Transmitting inquiries to and receiving product records from merchant servers is well known, as taught, for example, by Brown (Abstract; paragraphs 28, 30, and 79); hence it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to do so, for the obvious advantage of conveniently arranging an upsell related to another merchant.

Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a

seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 40 is closely parallel to claim 29, reciting means for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 44 and 48 are closely parallel to claim 29, reciting computer code for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 30, Katz discloses providing a preferred product record based upon the inquiry, the preferred product record being indicative of the preferred product (*ibid.*, as applied to claim 29; note especially column 9, lines 6-11). Katz does not disclose receiving the preferred product record from a merchant server, but it is well known to receive product records from merchant servers, as taught, for example, by Brown (*ibid.*, as applied to claim 29 above). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to receive the preferred product record from a merchant server, in the sense of the server of the seller disclosed by Katz, for the obvious advantage of assuring that the customer and seller are agreed about the description, price, etc., of the primary product; or to receive the preferred product record from a merchant server, in the sense of a server of a second merchant, for the obvious advantage, as implied by Katz (column 26, lines 49-65), of arranging for the customer to buy a product provided by a different and unaffiliated merchant.

Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 30 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). As per claim 31, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for a benefit to be associated with the alternate product, implying selecting the benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by

O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, especially a difference in their values, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

As per claim 32, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for the associated benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9).

Claims 33, 34, 41, 45, and 49 (with Walker)

Claims 33, 41, 45, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. As per claim 33, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: submitting an inquiry indicative of a preferred product; receiving an offer for at least one alternate product, the at least one alternate product being based on the inquiry; and transmitting an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than a preferred

product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term “upsell” rather than “downsell.” It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; “SUITENING THE POT” section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant’s invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17,

lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 41 is closely parallel to claim 33, reciting means for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds. Furthermore, the system of claim 41 could describe any personal computer with a modem for connecting to an e-commerce website, or any telephone for dealing with a telemarketer. Even if the selecting of an alternate travel product at the website or telemarketing center were found patentable, there appears to be nothing distinctive or even potentially patentable in the system recited in claim 41.

Claims 45 and 49 are closely parallel to claim 33, reciting computer code for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its

procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 33 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz discloses receiving an offer for a benefit to be associated with the alternate product (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the size of customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, especially a difference in their values, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claims 35-38, 42, 46, and 50 (with Walker)

Claims 35, 36, 42, 46, and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. As per claim 35, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product

for sale, comprising: receiving an inquiry indicative of a preferred product from a customer, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a database, wherein the at least one alternate product record is based upon the product inquiry, the alternate product record being indicative of an alternate product; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product to a customer (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose querying at least one merchant server, and receiving a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from a merchant server, but does disclose dealing with multiple databases (Figures 4 and 7; column 26, lines 13-37), and discloses that the alternate/upsold product may come from another merchant, unaffiliated with the seller of the original/preferred product (column 26, lines 49-65), which implies communicating with at least one merchant for the alternate/upsold product. Transmitting inquiries to and receiving product records from merchant servers is well known, as taught, for example, by Brown (Abstract; paragraphs 28, 30, and 79); hence it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to do so, for the obvious advantage of conveniently arranging an upsell related to another merchant.

Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel

product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker

teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as “a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions”) obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant’s invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 42 is closely parallel to claim 35, reciting means for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 46 and 50 are closely parallel to claim 35, reciting computer code for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which “may serve to store program information” (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 36, Katz does not disclose that the seller is a travel product seller, but travel product sellers are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker (“SUITENING THE POT” section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant’s invention for the seller to be a travel product seller, on the same grounds that it would have been obvious for the product to be a travel product seller.

Claims 37 and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 35 above, and further in view of Caldwell (“Hotels Pull a Switch”). Katz does not disclose that the seller

is a central reservation system or travel agent, but central reservation systems and travel agents are well known, as taught, for example, by Caldwell (Abstract and paragraph beginning "Holiday turns to industry-developed"); hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the seller to be one, for the obvious advantage of enabling such a seller to profit from selling an alternate travel product.

Claims 51-60 (with Walker)

Claims 51, 52, and 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. As per claim 51, claim 51 is closely parallel to claim 1, reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 1. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Katz does not disclose code for computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3,

line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values, and to have code therefor, to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

As per claim 52, claim 52 is parallel to claim 2, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 2.

As per claim 53, claim 53 is parallel to claim 6, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 6.

As per claim 54, claim 54 is parallel to claim 6, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 7.

Claims 55, 56, 58, and 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz and Tasker as applied to claims 52 and 53 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). As

per claim 55, claim 55 is parallel to claim 8, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 8.

As per claim 56, claim 56 is parallel to claim 10, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 10.

As per claim 58, claim 58 is parallel to claim 16, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 16.

As per claim 59, claim 59 is parallel to claim 24, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 24.

Claim 60 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, Dinell, and official notice as applied to claim 59 above, and further in view of Webber et al. (U.S. Patent 5,331,546). Claim 60 is parallel to claim 25, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 25.

Claim 54 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 51 above, and further in view of Johnson ("Family Dollar on the Move"). Claim 54 is parallel to claim 7, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 7.

Claim 57 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Walker, Johnson, and official notice as applied to claim 54 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). Claim 57 is parallel to claim 13, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 13.

Claim 61 (with Walker)

Claim 61 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. Claim 61 is closely parallel to claim 29, reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 29. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claim 62 (with Walker)

Claim 62 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. Claim 62 is closely parallel to claim 33, reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 33. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claims 63-66 (with Walker)

Claims 63 and 64 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?") , Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050), and official notice. Claims 63 and 64 are closely parallel to claims 35 and 36, respectively, with claim 63 reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, wherefore claim 63 is rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 35, and claim 64 is rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 36. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claims 65 and 66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Walker, and official notice as applied to claim 63 above, and further in view of Caldwell ("Hotels Pull a Switch"). Claims 65 and 66 are closely to claims 37 and 38, respectively, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claims 37 and 38.

Claim 67 (with Walker)

Claim 67 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the

Contras?"). Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving a record inquiry; processing the record inquiry to determine a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from an inventory database, the preferred and alternate product records being indicative of preferred and alternate products; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 20, lines 39-51; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than the preferred product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term "upsell" rather than "downsell." It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section), and also teaches the alternate travel product being more expensive, and presumably providing a greater value to the seller than the first travel product. Hence, it would have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Walker teaches computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of higher profit.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Walker expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Walker teaches at least one specific data manipulation function (column 15, lines 5-28), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at

least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claims 1-28, 39, 43, and 47 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 27, 28, 39, 43, and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. As per claim 1, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from an inventory database, the preferred and alternate product records being indicative of preferred and alternate products; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than the preferred product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term "upsell" rather than "downsell." It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel

products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Zaccarelli implies computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (three paragraphs beginning from, "Employees have been trained in"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of selling the most profitable items.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Zaccarelli expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Zaccarelli

implies a specific data manipulation function (ibid.), making an electronic data structure (defined as “a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions”) obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant’s invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 39 is closely parallel to claim 1, reciting means for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 43 and 47 are closely parallel to claim 1, reciting computer code for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which “may serve to store program information” (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 2, Katz discloses receiving an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product (Figure 7; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37).

As per claim 3, Katz does not expressly disclose receiving payment for the accepted at least one alternate product, but it is well known to receive payment for products (e.g., Katz, column 2, lines 43-55). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant’s invention to receive such payment, for the obvious advantage of not bankrupting oneself by providing valuable products without payment

As per claim 4, Katz discloses transmitting an offer to sell the preferred product (ibid., as applied to claim 1).

As per claim 5, Katz does not disclose that the preferred and alternate travel products are indicative of at least one of an airline ticket, a hotel room, a rental car, a cruise ticket, and train ticket, but Tasker teaches that the preferred and alternate travel products are indicative of a hotel room ("SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the preferred and alternate travel products to be indicative of at least one of an airline ticket, a hotel room, a rental car, a cruise ticket, and train ticket, for at least the stated advantage of upselling hotel accommodations.

As per claim 6, Katz discloses that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon inventory data associated with the preferred and alternate products (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37).

As per claim 7, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, but it is well known for businesses to study profit margin data, and attempt to increase sales of higher-margin products and/or services, as implied, for example, by Zaccarelli (three paragraphs beginning from, "Employees have been trained in"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for selecting the at least one alternate product to be based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, for the stated advantage of selling those items which are most profitable.

As per claims 16 and 17, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for a benefit to be associated with the at least one alternate product, implying selecting the benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9).

As per claim 19, Katz discloses that the selected benefit comprises at least one of additional frequent traveling miles, a price discount, a traveling class upgrade, and a package deal (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9; note especially column 27, lines 17-22).

As per claim 20, Katz does not disclose generating a benefit rating, wherein the benefit rating is based on a difference between the preferred and alternate products, but official notice is taken that it is well known to generate ratings, and given the assumption that a user of Katz's method is not irrational, the offer of an alternate product, especially in the embodiment of the alternate product being offered as an alternative to the preferred product, rather than purely as an addition, may be presumed to be based on a benefit rating, at least of a binary type, namely, that there is or is not a benefit to be expected by offering the alternate product, e.g., that it can or cannot likely be sold at a higher price and profit than the preferred product. Tasker also implies a benefit rating, by teaching upselling to more expensive products or services of greater financial benefit to the seller. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to generate a benefit rating based on a difference between the preferred and alternate products, for the obvious advantage of determining whether or not to offer a potential alternate product.

As per claim 24, Katz discloses receiving an inquiry that is indicative of a preferred product (the request to buy a preferred product being by implication an inquiry, such as, "Do you have this product for sale?") (ibid., as applied to claim 1 above).

As per claim 27, Katz discloses receiving an inquiry from a requester (ibid., as applied to claims 1 and 24 above), and receiving an indication of a preferred benefit from the requester (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 12-59; in the sense that prior purchases indicate what benefits the customer preferred to receive, e.g., purchase of a given version of software indicates a preference for the benefit of what that software accomplishes).

As per claim 28, Katz discloses storing indications of a preferred benefit with an identifier of the requester (disclosed by or inherent from column 9, lines 6-21, and column 24, lines 12-59); receiving a second inquiry from a requester (ibid., as applied to claims 1 and 24 above); retrieving the stored benefit based upon the identity of the requester (implied by column 9, lines 6-21, and column 24, lines 12-59); and transmitting an offer for the preferred benefit with an offer to sell a second alternate product (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 12-59; met by an alternate product such as a new version of previously purchased software, or mountain bike related goods or services offered to a customer who has previously purchased clothing for use in mountain biking).

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of

Johnson ("Family Dollar on the Move"). Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, but it is well known for businesses to study profit margin data, and attempt to increase sales of higher-margin products and/or services, as taught, for example, by Johnson (two paragraphs beginning from, "In October 1992, Family Dollar completed"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for selecting the at least one alternate product to be based upon profit margin data associated with the preferred and alternate products, for the obvious advantage of increasing profits.

Claims 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). As per claim 8, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a current load factor associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a current load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a current load factor, for the implied advantage of increasing the sales of tickets for seats that would otherwise go vacant and unpaid for.

As per claim 9, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the current load factor is indicative of the current available seating capacity.

As per claim 10, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a projected load factor associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data, including expected future availability in inventory (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a projected load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a projected load factor, for the implied advantage of increasing the sales of tickets for seats that would otherwise go vacant and unpaid for.

As per claim 11, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the projected load factor is indicative of the available seating capacity at the corresponding travel date.

As per claim 13, Katz does not disclose that selecting the at least one alternate product is based upon a load factor discrepancy associated with the alternate and preferred products, but Katz does disclose basing the selection upon inventory data (column 23, lines 40-50; column 26, lines 21-37), to which a current load factor is analogous, and Dinell teaches airlines offering promotions based on their load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article), and

in particular teaches, "If they notice that it [the load factor] is way off the scale one way or another, they are going to do something to change that," which implies taking action to reduce the number of passengers on overbooked flights, as well as offering promotional fares on flights with low load factors. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selecting to be based upon a load factor discrepancy associated with the alternate and preferred products, for the implied advantage of dealing with load factors off the scale, or at least too far toward one end of the scale, in each direction.

As per claims 14 and 15, commercial airplanes, as discussed in Dinell, necessarily have seating capacities, and the projected load factor is based upon the seating capacity; Dinell's teaching of doing something if the load factor is "way off the scale" implies taking action based on a discrepancy between an optimal load factor and a current or projected load factor.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, official notice, and Dinell as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of the anonymous article, "Western Pacific Load Factor Reaches 55 Percent in September," hereinafter "Western Pacific." Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Dinell discloses that the projected load factor is based upon historical travel product data, but it is well known to base projected future sales and related expectations upon historical data, as taught by "Western Pacific," specifically regarding load factor (whole article). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the projected load factor to be based upon historical

travel product data, for the obvious advantage of using the past as a guide – an imperfect but still useful and widely employed guide – to the future, as in, e.g., predicting holiday or other seasonal shifts in demand for airplane seats.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of De Lapa et al. (U.S. Patent 5,822,735). Katz does not disclose that the selected benefit has an associated time duration for acceptance, but Katz discloses that the selected benefit may be a discount coupon (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9; note especially column 27, lines 17-22), and it is well known for benefits or offers, and especially for discount coupons, to have associated time durations for acceptance, as taught, for example, by De Lapa (column 6, lines 20-34). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the selected benefit to have an associated time duration for acceptance, for the obvious advantages of encouraging the customer to make a decision and a purchase, and avoiding having potential obligations hanging over the seller indefinitely.

Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz and Tasker as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based on the benefit rating, but it is well known to select benefits to offer purchasers based on a benefit rating corresponding to the value of a purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based on the benefit rating, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of Popyk ("The Mastercard Approach to Customer Service"). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is a package deal benefit to be associated with the alternate travel product, the package deal benefit including at least one additional travel product, but it is well known to offer package deals as benefits, including at least one additional product with a product one is offering for sale, to make the purchase more attractive, as taught, for example, by Popyk (paragraph beginning, "We want to be remembered"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be a package deal, the package deal benefit including at least one additional travel product, for the obvious advantage of encouraging purchase of the alternate product offered as an upsell.

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 17 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based upon a difference between the value of the alternate product and the value of the preferred product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the size

of customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the value of the alternate product and the value of the preferred product, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claims 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 24 above, and further in view of Webber et al. (U.S. Patent 5,331,546). As per claim 25, Katz does not expressly disclose that the alternate product is within a defined variation limit from the received inquiry, but does disclose that the alternate product is based on its relation to a received product request/inquiry (column 9, lines 6-21; column 24, lines 4-59), and it is well known to define limits of variation, as taught, for example, by Webber (column 8, line 3, through column 11, line 26). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the alternate product to be within a defined variation limit from the received inquiry, for the stated advantage of attempting upsells likely to result in purchases.

As per claim 26, Katz does not expressly disclose that the defined variation limit is based on at least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of each alternate travel product and the travel inquiry, but does, as set forth in the rejection of

claim 25 above, disclose selecting an alternate product based on various types of similarity to a product inquiry, and Webber teaches a defined variation limit based on a difference between least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of possible travel products and a travel inquiry (column 8, line 3, through column 11, line 26). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the defined variation limit to be based on at least one of dates, times, classes, origin, and destination of each alternate travel product and the travel inquiry, for the stated advantage of attempting upsells likely to result in purchases; in particular, purchase of a ticket for a flight within a set time, e.g., two hours, of a desired time window, as in Webber.

Claims 29-32, 40, 44, and 48 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 29, 30, 40, 44, and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. As per claim 29, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving an inquiry indicative of a preferred product from a customer, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a database, wherein the at least one alternate product record is based upon the product inquiry, the alternate product record being indicative of an alternate product; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product to a customer;

and receiving an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product from the customer (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose transmitting the inquiry to at least one merchant server, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a merchant server, but does disclose dealing with multiple databases (Figures 4 and 7; column 26, lines 13-37), and discloses that the alternate/upsold product may come from another merchant, unaffiliated with the seller of the original/preferred product (column 26, lines 49-65), which implies communicating with at least one merchant for the alternate/upsold product. Transmitting inquiries to and receiving product records from merchant servers is well known, as taught, for example, by Brown (Abstract; paragraphs 28, 30, and 79); hence it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to do so, for the obvious advantage of conveniently arranging an upsell related to another merchant.

Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary

skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Zaccarelli implies computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (three paragraphs beginning from, "Employees have been trained in"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of selling the most profitable items.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Zaccarelli expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Zaccarelli implies a specific data manipulation function (ibid.), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious

invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 40 is closely parallel to claim 29, reciting means for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 44 and 48 are closely parallel to claim 29, reciting computer code for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 30, Katz discloses providing a preferred product record based upon the inquiry, the preferred product record being indicative of the preferred product (ibid., as applied to claim 29; note especially column 9, lines 6-11). Katz does not disclose receiving the preferred product record from a merchant server, but it is well known to receive product records from merchant servers, as taught, for example, by Brown (ibid., as applied to claim 29 above). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to receive the preferred product record from a merchant server, in the sense of the server of the seller disclosed by Katz, for the obvious advantage of assuring that the customer and seller are agreed about the description, price, etc., of the primary product; or to receive the preferred product record from a merchant server, in the sense of a server of a second merchant, for the obvious advantage, as implied by Katz (column 26, lines 49-65), of

arranging for the customer to buy a product provided by a different and unaffiliated merchant.

Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 30 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). As per claim 31, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for a benefit to be associated with the alternate product, implying selecting the benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the size of customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, especially a difference in their values, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

As per claim 32, Katz discloses transmitting an offer for the associated benefit (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9).

Claims 33, 34, 41, 45, and 49 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 33, 41, 45, and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We

Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. As per claim 33, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: submitting an inquiry indicative of a preferred product; receiving an offer for at least one alternate product, the at least one alternate product being based on the inquiry; and transmitting an acceptance to purchase the at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than a preferred product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term "upsell" rather than "downsell." It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated

advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at least one travel product relation parameter, but Zaccarelli implies computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (three paragraphs beginning from, "Employees have been trained in"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of selling the most profitable items.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Zaccarelli expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Zaccarelli implies a specific data manipulation function (*ibid.*), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 41 is closely parallel to claim 33, reciting means for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds. Furthermore, the system of claim 41 could describe any personal computer with a modem for connecting to an e-commerce website, or any telephone for dealing with a telemarketer. Even if the selecting of an alternate travel product at the website or telemarketing center were found patentable, there appears to be nothing distinctive or even potentially patentable in the system recited in claim 41.

Claims 45 and 49 are closely parallel to claim 33, reciting computer code for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and are therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 33 above, and further in view of O'Brien et al. (U.S. Patent 5,832,457). Katz discloses receiving an offer for a benefit to be associated with the alternate product (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9). Katz does not disclose that the benefit is based upon a difference between the preferred product and the alternate product, but it is well known to select a benefit based on the size of customer's purchase, as taught, for example, by O'Brien (column 6, lines 52-58). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the benefit to be selected based upon a difference between the preferred product and

the alternate product, especially a difference in their values, for the obvious advantage of giving customers incentive to purchase alternate products of higher price and greater profit to the seller, or, to look at it differently, offering a benefit that does not exceed the profit the seller could expect from selling the alternate product.

Claims 35-38, 42, 46, and 50 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 35, 36, 42, 46, and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. As per claim 35, Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving an inquiry indicative of a preferred product from a customer, and receiving at least one alternate product record from a database, wherein the at least one alternate product record is based upon the product inquiry, the alternate product record being indicative of an alternate product; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product to a customer (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11; column 25, line 56, through column 26, line 3; column 26, lines 13-37). Katz does not expressly disclose querying at least one merchant server, and receiving a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from a merchant server, but does disclose dealing with multiple databases (Figures 4 and 7;

column 26, lines 13-37), and discloses that the alternate/upsold product may come from another merchant, unaffiliated with the seller of the original/preferred product (column 26, lines 49-65), which implies communicating with at least one merchant for the alternate/upsold product. Transmitting inquiries to and receiving product records from merchant servers is well known, as taught, for example, by Brown (Abstract; paragraphs 28, 30, and 79); hence it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to do so, for the obvious advantage of conveniently arranging an upsell related to another merchant.

Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Katz does not disclose computing values to a seller associated with the preferred travel product record and the at least one alternate travel product record based on at

least one travel product relation parameter, but Zaccarelli implies computing values to a seller associated with a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record based on at least one product relation parameter (three paragraphs beginning from, "Employees have been trained in"). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to compute such values to a seller, for the stated advantage of selling the most profitable items.

Neither Katz, Tasker, nor Zaccarelli expressly discloses that the at least one product relation parameter is configured as an electronic data structure, but official notice is taken that electronic data structures are well known; furthermore, Zaccarelli implies a specific data manipulation function (ibid.), making an electronic data structure (defined as "a physical or logical relationship among data elements, designed to support specific data manipulation functions") obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention, for at least the obvious invention of enabling the disclosed specific data manipulation function to be readily carried out.

Claim 42 is closely parallel to claim 35, reciting means for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds.

Claims 46 and 50 are closely parallel to claim 35, reciting computer code for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds; Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its

procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62).

As per claim 36, Katz does not disclose that the seller is a travel product seller, but travel product sellers are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker ("SUITENING THE POT" section). Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the seller to be a travel product seller, on the same grounds that it would have been obvious for the product to be a travel product seller.

Claims 37 and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 35 above, and further in view of Caldwell ("Hotels Pull a Switch"). Katz does not disclose that the seller is a central reservation system or travel agent, but central reservation systems and travel agents are well known, as taught, for example, by Caldwell (Abstract and paragraph beginning "Holiday turns to industry-developed"); hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the seller to be one, for the obvious advantage of enabling such a seller to profit from selling an alternate travel product.

Claims 51-60 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 51, 52, and 53 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. As per claim 51, claim 51 is closely parallel to claim 1,

reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 1 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim

1. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

As per claim 52, claim 52 is parallel to claim 2, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 2.

As per claim 53, claim 53 is parallel to claim 6, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 6.

As per claim 54, claim 54 is parallel to claim 7, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 7.

Claims 55, 56, 58, and 59 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claims 52 and 53 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). As per claim 55, claim 55 is parallel to claim 8, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 8.

As per claim 56, claim 56 is parallel to claim 10, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 10.

As per claim 58, claim 58 is parallel to claim 16, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 16.

As per claim 59, claim 59 is parallel to claim 24, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 24.

Claim 60 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, official notice, and Dinell as applied to claim 59 above, and further in view of Webber et al. (U.S. Patent 5,331,546). Claim 60 is parallel to claim 25, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 25.

Claim 54 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 51 above, and further in view of Johnson ("Family Dollar on the Move"). Claim 54 is parallel to claim 7, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 7.

Claim 57 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Zaccarelli, official notice, and Johnson as applied to claim 54 above, and further in view of Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase"). Claim 57 is parallel to claim 13, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 13.

Claim 61 (with Zaccarelli)

Claim 61 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. Claim 61 is closely parallel to claim 29, reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 29 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set

forth above for claim 29. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claim 62 (with Zaccarelli)

Claim 62 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. Claim 62 is closely parallel to claim 33, reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 33 recites the steps of doing, and is therefore rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 33. Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claims 63-66 (with Zaccarelli)

Claims 63 and 64 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Brown et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0206393), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice.

Claims 63 and 64 are closely parallel to claims 35 and 36, respectively, with claim 63 reciting a memory, processor, and computer code for doing what claim 35 recites the steps of doing, wherefore claim 63 is rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 35, and claim 64 is rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claim 36.

Katz discloses computer programming for causing his system to carry out its procedure, as well as memory which "may serve to store program information" (column 13, lines 58-67; column 20, lines 23-62). Katz is not entirely explicit about his computer having a processor, but computers must inherently have processors.

Claims 65 and 66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz, Tasker, Brown, Zaccarelli, and official notice as applied to claim 63 above, and further in view of Caldwell ("Hotels Pull a Switch"). Claims 65 and 66 are closely to claims 37 and 38, respectively, and rejected on the same grounds set forth above for claims 37 and 38.

Claim 67 (with Zaccarelli)

Claim 67 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) in view of Tasker ("Should We Send Bad Guys' Guns to the Contras?"), Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?"), and official notice. Katz discloses a computer-implemented method for offering a product for sale, comprising: receiving a record inquiry; processing the record inquiry to determine a preferred product record and at least one alternate product record from an inventory database, the preferred and alternate product records being indicative of preferred and alternate products; selecting at least one alternate product, based on the at least one

alternate product record; and transmitting an offer to sell the selected at least one alternate product (Abstract; Figure 4; Figure 7; column 8, line 34, through column 9, line 21; column 11, line 62, through column 12, line 39; column 19, lines 24-58; column 20, lines 39-51; column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11). Katz does not expressly disclose that the at least one alternate product provides a greater value to a seller if sold than the preferred product, but this motivation is considered obvious, as well as implicit in the use of the term "upsell" rather than "downsell." It is implausible that a business would go to the trouble disclosed by Katz in order always to sell alternate products which were less valuable to the seller than the preferred products. Katz does not disclose that the products are travel products, and that the alternate travel product is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, but travel products are well known, as taught, for example, by Tasker; Tasker further teaches that an alternate travel product being upsold is related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter (in that both are hotel rooms, and presumably covering the same time period; "SUITENING THE POT" section), and also teaches the alternate travel product being more expensive, and presumably providing a greater value to the seller than the first travel product. Hence, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention for the products to be travel products, for the stated advantage of profiting from the upselling of travel products; and for the alternate travel product to be related to the preferred travel product by at least one travel product relation parameter, for the obvious advantage of offering the customer something that he is likely to buy.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 68 would be allowable if placed unambiguously within the technological arts to overcome the rejection made under 35 U.S.C. 101, and also amended to overcome the objection made for minor informalities.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The closest prior art of record, Offutt et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0184059), discloses a processor-implemented method for offering a travel product for sale, comprising: receiving from at least one customer an electronic travel inquiry related to a transportation ticket from a requester via a communications network, the travel inquiry including at least a preferred origin, a preferred destination, a preferred travel date, and a preferred travel time, the transportation ticket comprising at least one of an airline ticket, a train ticket, and a cruise ticket (Abstract; Figure 1; paragraphs 25, 36-38, 42-47, 53, and 56). Offutt does not expressly disclose a preferred class for a transportation ticket, but does disclose that the customer request can include lodging class (paragraph 46), and it is well known to specify fare class, as taught by Lynch (U.S. Patent 6,119,094) (column 7, lines 12-15). Offutt does not disclose querying an acceptable travel data range and an acceptable travel time range from a tolerance database, although Offutt does disclose choosing a geographical range for origins and destinations, without specifying how this is predetermined (paragraph 12), but it is well known to make queries from persons or databases.

Offutt discloses retrieving a plurality of alternative transportation ticket records from a database or databases, and comparing features of the alternative transportation tickets with the features preferred in the customer's request (Abstract; Figure 1; paragraphs 25, 36-38, 42-47, 53, and 56, especially paragraph 53). Offutt does not disclose retrieving only those alternative transportation tickets having alternate origins matching the preferred origin, having alternate destinations matching the preferred destination, having alternate travel dates within the acceptable travel date range, and having alternate travel times within the acceptable travel time range, but Lynch teaches retrieving only those alternative transportation tickets having alternate origins matching the preferred origin, having alternate destinations matching the preferred destination, and having dates/times within a reasonable distance of the preferred date (column 7, line 8, through column 8, line 15). Offutt does not disclose determining a preferred itinerary margin for the travel inquiry and an alternate itinerary margin for each of the plurality of alternative transportation tickets, but it is known to determine a profit margin for items, and endeavor to sell those which are most profitable, as taught by Walker et al. (U.S. Patent 7,249,050) (Abstract; column 3, line 42, through column 4, line 3; column 11, lines 14-39; column 15, lines 5-28; column 17, lines 23-31), and by Zaccarelli ("Is Your 'Internal Marketing' up to Par?").

Offutt does not disclose determining a preferred itinerary load factor discrepancy for the travel inquiry and an alternate itinerary load factor discrepancy for each of the plurality of alternative transportation tickets, but Dinell ("Businesses Taking a Hard Look at Air Travel as Fares Increase") teaches airlines offering promotions based on their

load factors (paragraph beginning "Promotion fares are offered because" through end of article). Offutt does not disclose querying an optimal load factor associated with a given itinerary, querying a given load factor associated with the given itinerary, querying historical sales data associated with the given itinerary, computing a projected load factor and the historical sales data, and computing the itinerary load factor as the difference between the optimal load factor and projected load factor; determining a value differential associated with the travel inquiry and each of the plurality of alternative travel tickets based on some combination of the preferred itinerary margin, the alternate itinerary margin, the preferred load factor discrepancy, and the preferred itinerary load factor discrepancy.

Offutt discloses selecting at least one alternative travel ticket, and determining date and times (Abstract; Figure 1; paragraphs 25, 36-38, 42-47, 53, and 56). Offutt does not disclose querying a benefit rating schedule from a benefit rating database, computing a weighted benefit rating based on the weighting schedule, the data difference, the time difference, and the class difference, querying a benefits database based on the weighted benefit rating, and retrieving at least one benefit for association with the at least one alternative travel ticket based on the querying of the benefits database, wherein the benefit includes a conditional expiration feature that causes the benefit to expire within a predetermined time period unless the customer accepts the alternative travel ticket within the predetermined time period, and providing the at least one benefit and the at least one alternative travel ticket for review by the customer via the communications network. Katz et al. (U.S. Patent 6,055,513) teach providing a

benefit offered with a product (column 18, lines 2-15; column 26, line 66, through column 27, line 22; Figure 9), and it is well known for benefits to be limited-time offers with conditional expiration features, just as it is well known to query databases. However, given the existence of claim elements not in the relevant prior art of record (see especially previous paragraph), and the number of disparate prior art references that would be required to assemble a method resembling that recited in claim 68, without clear motivations given in the prior art references or the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art of electronic commerce at the time of applicant's invention to assemble the teachings of the various references into the detailed method of claim 68, the claim as a whole is non-obvious.

“Means for” language

It is noted that claims 39, 40, 41, and 42 use “means for” language. Nonetheless, they are not treated as invoking 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. If Applicant wishes to invoke 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, Applicant should provide an explicit statement to that effect. 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph states:

An element in a claim for a combination may be expressed as a means or step for performing a specified function without the recital of structure, material or acts in support thereof, and such claim shall be construed to cover the corresponding structure, material, or acts described in the specification and equivalents thereof.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed February 2, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicants have amended the claims, but Examiner has applied additional prior art to reject amended claims 1-67, as well as making a rejection on the basis of the introduction of new matter. Applicants submit that an omnibus rejection of multiple claim elements is not sufficiently specific, to which Examiner replies that the elements are listed are found in the parts of the Katz patent listed, and there is no need to go into fine detail. Applicants fail to state specifically what Katz is alleged not to teach. Applicants argue that Katz teaches away from the modifications to arrive at the claimed invention, because Katz teaches an upsell where the product or service differs materially from the product or service for which the contact was made. Examiner replies that Katz does not teach away from the requisite modification, because Katz does not teach that the upsold product or service is totally unlike the. On the contrary, Katz teaches that the customer may be offered a new product which includes the functionalities of the product which formed the basis of the primary transaction (column 9, lines 6-21; see also, e.g., column 23, line 40, through column 24, line 11).

Applicants also criticize Examiner's allege piecemeal analysis. Examiner invoked and quoted from *In re Keller* and *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*; Examiner reiterates these. Examiner maintains that the combinations made would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art; such a person plausibly would have been familiar with articles published by the time of Applicant's priority date, and, in the eyes of the law, with patent publications having valid priority. Nothing in Examiner's rejections

is believed to attribute extraordinary skill or knowledge to the hypothetical person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

The test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference; nor is it that the claimed invention must be expressly suggested in any one or all of the references. Rather, the test is what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981).

The Supreme Court has ruled in *KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 82 USPQ2d 1385 (U.S. 2007) that the teaching, suggestion or motivation test should not be applied as a rigid and mandatory formula that limits obviousness analysis through a formalistic conception of the words “teaching,” “suggestion,” and “motivation” or by overemphasis on the importance of published articles and explicit content of issued patents, since market demand, rather than scientific literature, often drives design trends, and granting patent protection to advances that would occur “in the ordinary course” without real innovation retards progress and may, in the case of patents combining previously known elements, deprive prior inventions of their value or utility (1385-1386).

To quote further from *KSR* (at 1386), “[R]igid application of preventative rules that deny fact finders recourse to common sense are neither necessary nor consistent with precedent.”

The Court also noted in the *KSR* decision, “[I]f there is design need or market pressure to solve [a] problem, and there are [a] finite number of identified, predictable solutions, [a] person of ordinary skill in art has good reason to pursue known options within his or her technical grasp, and if this leads to anticipated success, it is likely product of ordinary skill and common sense, not innovation.”

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. DeLorme et al. (U.S. Patent 5,948,040) disclose a travel reservation information and planning system. Sehr (U.S. Patent 6,085,976) discloses a travel system and methods utilizing multi-application passenger cards. Lynch et al. (U.S. Patent 6,119,094) disclose an automated system for identifying low-cost travel arrangements. Offutt et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0184059) disclose methods and apparatus for determining non-obvious savings in the purchase of goods and services.

Adams (“Web Watch: Indispensable Internet Sites for Global Traders”) discloses a system which automatically searches for the lowest fare and can suggest other flights on days when flying is cheaper. Rosato (“On-Line Tips for Travelers”) discloses TheTrip.com automatically searching for flights from alternative airport and for connecting flights.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nicholas D. Rosen, whose telephone number is 571-272-6762. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith, can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Non-official/draft communications can be faxed to the examiner at 571-273-6762.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Nicholas D. Rosen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625
March 26, 2009